

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please amend claims 8, 9 and 12.

Listing of Claims:

1 - 7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently amended) A hydraulic system connecting first, second and third hydraulic motors in series, each motor rotating a mower blade under first, second and third mower decks, comprising:

a first solenoid-operated directional control valve that is energized by lowering the second mower deck moving the second hydraulic motor into an operating position to provide an electrical signal to causing the first solenoid-operated directional control valve which provides ~~to provide~~ a first pilot signal to a first pilot-operated directional control valve that in response to the first pilot signal directs a flow of hydraulic fluid from the first hydraulic motor to the second hydraulic motor without directing the flow through any other restrictive valves; the first solenoid-operated directional control valve being de-energized by raising the second mower deck moving the second hydraulic motor into a non-operating position to cut the electrical signal to causing the first solenoid-operated directional control valve to end the pilot signal to and the first pilot-operated directional control valve to direct the flow of hydraulic fluid from the first hydraulic motor to bypass the second hydraulic motor; and

a second solenoid-operated directional control valve that is energized by lowering the third mower deck moving the third hydraulic motor into an operating position to provide an electrical signal to causing the second solenoid-operated directional control valve which provides ~~to provide~~ a second pilot signal to a second pilot-operated directional control valve that in response to the second pilot signal directs a flow of hydraulic fluid from the first hydraulic motor to the third hydraulic motor without directing the flow through any other restrictive valves; the second solenoid-operated directional control valve being de-energized by raising the third mower deck moving the third hydraulic motor into a non-operating position to cut the electrical signal to causing the second solenoid-operated directional control valve to

end the pilot signal to ~~and~~ the second pilot-operated directional control valve to direct the flow of hydraulic fluid from the first hydraulic motor to bypass the third hydraulic motor.

9. (Currently amended) The hydraulic system of claim 8 wherein lowering both of the second and third mower decks ~~moving both of the second and third hydraulic motors~~ into their operating positions causes the first and second solenoid-operated directional control valves to provide pilot signals to the first and second pilot-operated directional control valves that in response to the pilot signals direct the hydraulic fluid from the first hydraulic motor to the second and third hydraulic motors in series without directing the flow through any other restrictive valves.

10-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently amended) A hydraulic system to provide hydraulic flow to first, second and third hydraulic motors located on first, second and third mower decks, the second and third mower decks ~~motors~~ movable between operating and non-operating positions, comprising:

a pair of solenoid-operated control valves, each solenoid-operated control valve associated with one of the second and third motors and providing a pilot signal if the mower deck on which the motor is located is moved to ~~in~~ the operating position; and

a pair of pilot operated control valves operatively connected to the solenoid-operated control valves; each pilot operated control valve directing hydraulic flow from the first motor to one of the second and third hydraulic motors in the presence of a pilot signal associated with that motor without directing the hydraulic flow through any other restrictive valves, and preventing hydraulic flow to the second or third hydraulic motor in the absence of the pilot signal; the pilot operated control valves directing hydraulic flow from the first motor to the second and third hydraulic motors in series in the presence of a pair of pilot signals without directing the hydraulic flow through any other restrictive valves.

13. (Previously presented) The hydraulic system of claim 12 wherein the first hydraulic motor is not associated with a solenoid-operated control valve.

Application No. 09/982,914
Response to August 18, 2006 Office Action